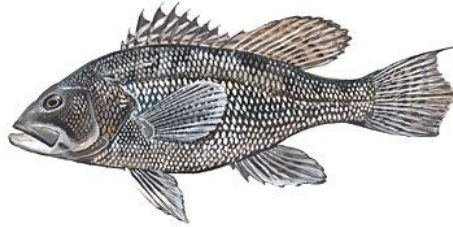


South Atlantic Black Sea Bass Frequently Asked Questions August 2011



What is the current stock status of black sea bass?

- Black sea bass are overfished (their population is too small).
- Black sea bass are experiencing overfishing (the rate of removals is too high).

What has been done to end overfishing of black sea bass?

- In September 2006, Amendment 13C to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 13C) reduced the commercial and recreational allocation over three years to 309,000 pounds gutted weight and 409,000 pounds gutted weight for the commercial and recreational sectors respectively.
- In 2008, Amendment 15A to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 15A) established a 10-year rebuilding schedule, and a rebuilding strategy. The rebuilding strategy in Amendment 15A holds the catch levels established in Amendment 13C constant after the June 2008-May 2009 fishing year.
- On January 31, 2011, Amendment 17B to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 17B) became effective. Amendment 17B specifies annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) for the recreational and commercial sectors of the black sea bass component of the snapper-grouper fishery, as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.
 - An ACL is the level of annual catch of a stock or stock complex that if met or exceeded triggers some corrective action, such as a seasonal closure or a quota closure. ACLs are set at levels that prevent overfishing from occurring.
 - AMs are management controls to prevent ACLs from being exceeded, and to correct overages of ACLs if they occur.

How does Amendment 17B affect black sea bass?

- Amendment 17B retained the recreational and commercial sector allocations established in Amendment 13C; 309,000 pounds for the commercial sector, and 409,000 pounds for the recreational sector, and specified those allocations as the sector ACLs.
- The commercial sector already has an AM in place; the commercial sector is closed for the remainder of the fishing season when the quota/ACL is projected to be met. However,

no AM previously existed for the recreational sector. Therefore, Amendment 17B establishes a recreational AM.

What is the new recreational accountability measure for black sea bass?

- If black sea bass are overfished, and the recreational ACL of 409,000 pounds gutted weight is projected to be met, NOAA Fisheries Service will issue a notice to close the recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing season.
- Additionally, if the ACL is exceeded, NOAA Fisheries Service will issue a notice reducing the ACL for the next fishing season by the amount of the overage.
- To determine if one year's ACL has been exceeded, the ACL will be compared to a running average of the most recent three years of recreational landings. For 2011, landings from 2010 and 2011 would be used, for 2012 and beyond an average of most recent three years of landings would be used.

How did this new recreational accountability measure affect the 2010-2011 fishing season?

- In January 2010, NOAA Fisheries Service determined that the recreational ACL for black sea bass had been met, and issued a black sea bass fishery closure effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) February 12, 2011, through 12:01 a.m. June 1, 2011.
- The recreational black sea bass closure applies to state and federal waters for individuals on vessels issued a federal snapper-grouper charter vessel/headboat permit.

What could be done to extend the length of the recreational fishing season for black sea bass?

- The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reduced the recreational black sea bass bag limit from 15 fish per person to 5 per person as a means of extending the recreational fishing season. The reduced bag limit went into effect June 22, 2011.

How can I get more information on black sea bass and/or a copy of Amendment 17B?

- More information on Amendment 17B and snapper-grouper regulations may be obtained via the Web at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/17BFAQs12_28_10.pdf or <http://www.safmc.net>.
- Hardcopies of Amendment 17B and environmental assessment may be requested from:

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Phone (843) 571-4366
toll free (866) SAFMC-10
Fax (843) 769-4520

Or:

NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office
Office of Sustainable Fisheries
263 13th Avenue South

St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505

Phone (727) 824-5305

Fax: (727) 824-5308